

"UPON WHAT GROUND DO WE CONTINUE TO FOSTER IMPROVE AND ENLARGE THE BRETHREN CHURCH?"

[The following paper was read by P. J. Brown at the recent Ohio Conference on the above question. It is simply an outline of the speech which he made on the subject.—Ed.]

In all evangelistic efforts two things should be kept in view, 1st. The glory of God. 2nd. The needs of the world.

Webster gives about nine definitions to the word *ground*, but we assume the ex.com. had in mind the 3rd definition, "The basis on which anything rests, foundation," hence knowledge, belief or conviction. Paul says. The church of the living God is the pillar and *ground* of the truth, now if the Brethern church answers to this declaration, if she is the *ground* of the truth and we are her promoters, then the question is easily answered. We continue to foster, improve, and enlarge the Brethern church by our least effort to teach, practice and defend the doctrine of Christ and it is only by so doing that we can in any way give glory to God. 2nd. It is only by teaching, practicing, and defending, the gospel of Christ that we can in any possible way do the world any good, for the gospel of Christ is the power of God unto Salvation, I mean the whole gospel without addition or diminution, and whenever we allow either we rob God of his Sovereignty, deprive the world of its legacy—and lose our own share in the inheritance, of the Saints in light; hence I regard it as of the utmost importance that we have a fostering care, not over ourselves, *only*, not over our home congregation only, but over the Brethern church at large. In a certain sense every man is his brother's keeper, and in that sense it is my business and yours to know that every minister in every local congregation is faithful in teaching, practicing and defending the doctrine of the church. The difficulty that confronts is the fact that the church has never yet defined her position on the doctrines of the gospel and this leaves us ever and anon exposed to the visionary fancies of the theological experimentarian, with all his tendencies toward liberalism, universalism and deism and until our Brethren in general Conference get sufficiently schooled to understand this weak point and become willing to give

us a remedy we know of no better way to work than by continuing our defense of the truth against all foes let them be within or without the church. Finally, does the world need the Brethern church? is there another that would answer? If so let us disband. We claim there is not. 1st, all who are liberal fail to obey the gospel. 2nd, all who do obey the gospel (if any) are too tyrannical.

AN INFIDEL SILENCED.

A noted infidel was traveling in a car in which a minister was seated. He at once commenced an argument with the clergyman in a loud tone, so as to be heard by other passengers. Among the latter was a blind man who listened attentively. Turning suddenly to him in a pause in the argument, the infidel said:

"Do you, sir, believe in a God, who has made this beautiful earth, and the sun to shine upon it, and who has adorned the heavens with myriads of stars, and yet, without any offence on your part, has deprived you for ever of the power of beholding them?"

"I am surprised, my dear sir," replied the man, "that you should ask me such a question. I do believe in the existence of God as firmly as I do in my own, and I could doubt the one as easily as the other. There is however, one thing that strikes me as being very peculiar in what you have said. When you reason of God you do not seem to be governed by the same principles as when reasoning about men and the common affairs of every day life."

The infidel denied the inference and the blind man continued:

"Suppose, on reaching your home and on entering your room, you find a lighted lamp upon the table—what will be your conclusion?"

"Why," answered the infidel, with a sneer, "I shall conclude that some one placed it there."

"Well, then, when you look into the heavens and see those innumerable lights of which you have spoken, why do you not come to the same conclusion, that some intelligent being placed them there?"

The skeptic declined to talk any more on the subject, but it was evident to all the passengers that he felt thoroughly humbled and uncomfortable.

JOHN MITCHELL.

THE GOSPEL OF EMPHASIS.

There are people who do not seem to clearly discern the difference between noise and power. Undoubtedly power is often accompanied with noise, but there are still greater powers which work in silence. The thunderbolt has power, but the power of the sunbeam is far greater than that of the thunderbolt. Much of the noise made by machinery is due to imperfect construction, or to defects and derangement of the parts. An engine that rattles and clatters may not have a tenth part of the power of one which is perfect in its fittings and appointments, and moves without jostling or rattling, but with a thousand horse power. So in the gospel, men who but imperfectly comprehend the truth of Christ and the ways of God, are sometimes far more demonstrative than others whose understanding is more complete and accurate. The Gospel of the Son of God is no more dependent upon thunder and lightning and earthquake, than the seed which is cast into the ground. When once the word of God is sown and its vital energies have taken root in the human soul, its original work may go on in sunshine or in storm, in silence or amid the tumult, and the day of eternity alone can reveal the full extent of that mighty power which "wrought in Christ when it raised him from the dead," and which still works in the hearts of all who know his grace and share his love. No human excitement, spasmodic struggling, or artificial zeal, no politic craft working unseen to accomplish personal ends, can take the place of this divine, eternal power by which God works in the hearts of the sons of men. It is not eloquence, it is not emphasis, it is not fuss and noise and fury: it is the hidden and divine energy of Him "who worketh all things according to the counsel of his own will;" and whose silent but beneficent energies have brightened and blessed a lost world and reconciled a wandering race to God.

Let those who believe in Christ see to it that their souls are full of this divine power, and then men will take knowledge of them that they have been with Jesus, and they will manifest the savor of his knowledge to all with whom they have to do.